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# UNIONS VERSUS MENEGEMENT

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* Menegement is a Rastafarian-derived term. In Rastafarian ter-terminology 'MAN' is the ideal. A 'MEN' by contrast is the degenerate human.

Hence ONE - MENISM and MENEGEMENT - terms used frequently in this pamphlet.

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PAMPHLET A

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This pamphlet reproduces the text of a talk given recently to a seminar for workers.

# UNIONS VERSUS MENEGEMENT

## THE TASKS OF INDEPENDENT WORKER ORGANISATION

By Joseph Edwards.

One heart brethren. We are supposed to be dealing with the struggle of workers representation versus menegement which basically is a struggle involving workers and capitalists. But there are certain things we consider as basic that we would like to mention before going into the details.

### FIRST PRINCIPLES

First it needs to be emphasized that menegement is a part, a functioning part of the ruling class in Jamaica, and every workers' representation organised at every place of work should fully understand this. The importance of emphasizing this is because there are many workers today, and including some in union leadership, who seem to accept that capitalism is a part of the everlasting make-up of society and do not see menegement as really part of the oppressor class from which workers will eventually have to take power.

Any union which does not see menegement as part of the oppressor class is unable to construct any proper strategy directing and influencing their activities. Therefore, what worker organisations which are independent of the NWU-BITU * set-up should have is the deep and thorough-going understanding that menegement is the everyday functioning part of the oppressor class. And that all institutions of today - the churches, the educational set-up, the press, parliament, police, courthouse, etc. - which seem

* National Workers' Union and the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union.

to appear as independent institutions of the society - are in fact a part of the whole set-up of society that strengthens and backs up the position of menegement.

Therefore, the organisation of workers is not only a struggle against the men we see in the manager's office or the owners of a particular business place, but it is part of the overall struggle against capitalist society. And this is the position we all face as workers.

## STRATEGY OF INDEPENDENT WORKER ORGANISATIONS

We should definitely take all this into consideration in determining how unions should function - what are their objectives and what is the strategy of their actions. What should influence all unions is an overall strategy for the overthrow of capitalism, which will take away the responsibility for the management of production out of the hands of the capitalist and place it in the hands of the working-class and thereby organise the entire society for the benefit of the working-class people.

A particular union representation at a particular place of work may not consciously express this objective in a distinct way in their everyday activities. What I speak of is the movement - the trade-union movement must be particularly directed towards that end - and the activities of any particular union representation or the tactics of groups of workers at their particular place of work must be directed towards achieving this overall objective.



With that understanding there is nothing really as an overall strategy concerning any one particular union representation. What must be understood is a strategy connecting the entire trade-union movement to bring about the success of the main objective of the working-class. But workers representation, whether it be an agricultural workers union or the Public Cleansing Workers Union or any union here in Kingston or in the countryside, should only represent different methods that different groups of workers are using to bring about, gradually but surely, the stage where they will finally come into confrontation with capitalist power and will bring the workers into the position of power in the country.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE ORGANISATION OF SUGAR AND BANANA WORKERS

### COMMUNITY WORK

Sometime ago there were some discussions going around concerning the importance of genuine working-class representation in certain important areas of industry in the country - of bauxite in particular, of cement, of public services, of electricity and telephone companies. These were considered as strategic areas where the revolutionary trade-union movement should seek to represent workers, to get workers organised and represented outside the BITU-NWU set-up. This was considered as very important - as strategic, so to speak, using the word in that sense - because unless the working class trade-union representation is able to influence and have workers consciously organised outside the BITU-NWU set-up in these industries it would mean that the trade-union movement would not be able to give maximum effective support to the political movement in the liberation struggle.

This reasoning went ahead to place much less importance on the organisation of sugar workers, banana workers, and agricultural workers in general. One of the basic causes for this kind of reasoning is because the sugar industry and the banana industry are seen as dying industries in the set-up of capitalism in the Caribbean today, while the bauxite and other such industries are seen as grwoing industries, and industries that involve the direct control of American imperialism which is the main oppressor of the working-class people today.

This is not absolutely true. Let me give some explanation. The main value of working-class representation in the bauxite industry to the liberation struggle is more or less its capacity to disrupt, in the sense that any serious trade-union representation in which workers at the bauxite industry are organised, and which becomes a part of the revolutionary movement in this country, will no doubt be able to play a very important part in disrupting the influence and control of American imperialism. But apart from that necessary ability we want to sight-up the ability of working-class trade-union representation of sugar and other agricultural workers to also play a very strategic role.

The sugar workers for instance, while not being industrially as important as bauxite workers in terms of capitalist economics, occupy and involve a much wider area of land. The community nature of trade-union representation among sugar workers provide a greater opportunity to reach home our new cultural and education programme to a greater number of people - of the poorest and most oppressed - thar does the opportunity for community work among bauxite workers.



In the bauxite industry very few workers live in the area where this industry is set-up, and one of the natural advantages that allows for the development of the community aspect of trade-union representation, is where you find workers of any industry living in the area where their place of work is.

The nature of the bauxite industry is such that most of the work is done by skilled labour coming from Kingston and even from America and Canada. The labour which comes from the surrounding country parts is a very small percentage of the labour force. It is only during the period of construction that more local labour is used, and mainly to do what they call unskilled jobs. Therefore, the bulk of the labour force and the more educated section live very far away and every night travel away from the area of work.

The sugar industry is quite different. In the first place, sugar workers are employed for half of the year and unemployed for the other half of the year. Any honest and genuine trade-union representation must take serious consideration of this unemployed-employed status of sugar workers. So it is with banana workers in some instances, and most agricultural workers.

These particular problems of agricultural workers must be attended to by their trade-union representation, and the unions should develop the kind of community work that attends to the needs of sugar workers during the unemployed periods of their lives. By the very nature of this community work, not only will individual sugar workers become involved with the educational programme, the production activities, and the cultural rejuvination of themselves, which is the substance of community work, but the entire commu-

nity, its poorest and oppressed families, stretching much further to other surrounding areas will participate.

For instance, there is no doubt that any working-class trade-union representation of sugar workers in the area of Sav-la-Mar would influence the entire population of Westmoreland.

## TO CONSOLIDATE THE POWER

The basic strategy of community work is to extend its attention from the immediate social needs of workers in the areas where they work and live, to their serious political education as an oppressed class - the working class. The political consciousness will be decisive at that period of final confrontation with the imperialist and local capitalists for state power, and that period of consolidating working-class state power against counter-revolution. And this should be clear in our minds from now, because one of the things that is puzzling revolutionary movements and people in the Caribbean today is what are we going to do about the American war ships whenever we hear them parked outside. That is what is worrying everyone and no one seems to have an answer for that, because they always come. They entered straight into the Dominion Republic, they entered straight into Cuba, and they were not far off from Trinidad, and therefore this seems to be a serious contemplation. *

* There was a brethren I saw the other day who reasoned to solve this problem by referring to the basic aspirations of Rasta Man going to Africa. I would just like to state here that the Rastafari Moveman concerning the struggle for repatriation is overcoming a very important stage of reasoning today. For while every single Rasta Man is united on the demand for immediate repatriation, there are many brethren who have sighted up that the basic aspirations of African people is our total liberation from the



It seems to me that the source of strength in consolidating the power of the working-class people at any place and any time during their struggle is the extent to which we understand the problem at hand. And it is in this overall sense we must see how strategically important it is for the representation of sugar and other agricultural workers in providing the opportunity for the development of community work and the political consciousness of the greatest number of our people over the widest possible area in the country.

## THE COMMUNITY SHOP

I'll give a practical example of how to begin. If sugar workers are being represented by their working-class trade-union representation in a particular area, what must immediately go up in that area is a shop. The purpose of that shop is to make as much use as possible of the union dues that are contributed by the workers in the area. This is so because one of the very important things in the country that working-class trade-union representation must aim to do, is to stop - to put an instantaneous break to a certain movement of colonialism. In the same way that the profits of labour and resources of the coun-

domination of imperialism and local capitalism. As I sight-up, repatriation is not the end but the means to the end - like other thousands of means that oppressed African people are using for our cultural liberation, for the liberation of our race, for the liberation of Africa, for putting an end to the exploitation of man by man anywhere on earth. But I only mention this because it comes up forcefully as a way in which we are to solve the problem of the American imperialist intervention - by leaving the Caribbean and going to Africa. But as is obvious, American imperialism is not only a Caribbean problem, it is also an African problem, it is a world problem, and the responsibility of people is not to leave it where they see it, but to destroy it where they find it.

try is moving from the whole of Jam-down * here to America and other foreign countries, is the same way Kingstonian based trade-unions are practising a type of local colonialism, in which all union dues contributed by workers in the countryside are leaving the countryside to the colonialist centre in Kingston, where the headquarters of all trade-unions in Jamaica are set up. In the same way we intend to stop the imperialist robbery of our resources and profits from our labour, in the same way we must begin to stop union dues from leaving the poverty strickened areas of the countryside to Kingston.

Over a period of time, with efficient management this shop will be able to do good business, supplying the consumer goods needed by sugar workers and their families, and providing food to the more hungry and destitute children of any family in the area.

The shop also has another important purpose. There are many sugar workers who, when not working on the sugar crop, carry out rice and other crop cultivation in the area of Westmoreland. Instead of leaving the marketing of their produce to the Agricultural Marketing Corporation they could market it by way of their shops. There is the wicked practice of trucks going around collecting rice and taking it to Spanish Town where the rice mill threshes it and puts it in plastic bags, labelled 'Grace' and 'Eve', and sells it back to people in the same area where they took it from for approximately four times the price they purchased it for.

Instead of this all round perpetual robbery of agricultural workers labour, their trade-union representation could begin to organise the marketing of their produce and get rice cultivated by

* another Rastafarian - derived term for Jamaica which is very popular.



these small farmers together, keep it within the parish, bag it within the parish, and circulate it at the time when workers need it most - that is, the period when they are not working. This does not mean that crops produced in any area should not be marketed in other areas. Basically, what is meant is that crops produced by sugar workers during the period of unemployment in the sugar industry must be marketed to the benefit of sugar workers and the community where they live, first and foremost. This is what we call the community aspect of working-class trade-union representation.

## THE MEDICAL SCHEME

Another example is demanding certain improvement to the medical scheme, because what exists as the medical scheme serving sugar workers today, through the Sugar Welfare Board, is something which is useless.

There is a sugar worker I met one day whose woman went to the clinic for attention, and this man at the clinic was asking her if she was married. So, you have a medical scheme for sugar workers which discriminates against women who don't marry in this babylonian set-up. About ninety per cent of the sugar workers that I know don't marry in this babylonian kingdom. They marry how Black people must marry, as man and woman getting together, continuing the reproduction of their race, and building up the family in peace and love.

Now, if we talk of a medical scheme we must forsee one which takes care of the entire family of the sugar worker and not only his woman and children, and in so doing our work would automatically reach home to a section of the people which is

permanently unemployed. This is not difficult. Added to improvement in the existing medical scheme- health education, greater use of the Blue Cross Society, and the use of preventitive medicine can be organised in the community of sugar workers. The income needed for this service can very well be organised from the people involved, who at the present time are being fleeced by doctors who charge them high fees and have no interest in the workers state of health.

So we see that the community aspect of our work will do two things at the same time - it will relate the activities of the trade-union to the problems of the unemployed and also associate the union with the problems of the entire community. It also provides the opportunity to expose the entire community to the education programmes of the union. This is not simply being tactical, it is of strategic importance. It will provide the constant, everyday communication between the community and the union. It will serve both the immediate and long term interests of the working class.

When we realise the responsibilities of the future and scientifically try to relate the future with what we are now doing, we will see that it is the community aspect of our work that will build the spiritual groundation of our people. and that is their main strength. To consolidate our people it is going to depend very seriously on their spiritual development, upon their political understanding - upon their groundation in various forms. It is nothing exceptional to expect the unions to help to do this.



## TRADE UNIONS ARE POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

The reason why I think trade-union representation should do these things is because basically a union is a political organisation, and in truth and in fact Africans and other Black people in these times cannot afford the luxury of any special organisation for any special purpose. That is to say, we must not use the church only for the purpose of kneeling down and praying to God, or the unions only to beg the boss to keep the job or to beg him for a little more money. No! We cannot afford the luxury of using these organisations in the way the Europeans have been using them, and until now we have been using them. We have got to use them much more creatively - Black people must use their trade-union representation in the way Paul Bogle used the church - to move us to a position of power, to the position of liberation.

Now I want to make this very important point that we cannot afford this luxury, because what was expected of the present political organisations - that they would have resolved the problems of our people - has been totally disappointed. What exists today in the JLP-PNP * organisations and their parliament, amounts to an outright institution of imperialist agents who have been hired and paid. They get paid in two forms, as wages from taxpayers money and as "gifts" * collected from the capitalists. Internationally they are known as the 'ten per cent parliament'. These are the two pay packets they have. The crime is that they are working against those people who pay them wages, openly against them and the people who give them gifts , they are working for those people. Every administrative department of the society occupies that position.

* Jamaica Labour Party and the People's National Party.

* Hon. Wilton Hill in Parliament: "when is a gift not a gift"

Now, if a people find themselves living under a situation like that, not say as in Guyana where at least you have The People's Political Party agitating in the interests of the people; nor as in some other country where a political party might be agitating in the interests of the people and thereby offer a choice, even if neither of them might be as good as possible. But here in Jam-down everything operates in the interests of foreigners and capitalism, even trade-unions.

Therefore, we find ourselves rid completely of any organisation through which we can express our grievances. Trade-union representation is the most fundamental organisation today, through which workers and the working-class people can express their grievances in spite of the reactionary bureaucratic opportunist leaders.

Those who are still being fooled by the PNP today have to go back to The Gleaner some time in November 1969. On the front page Michael Menlie* was saying that the PNP has long abandoned socialism and so on and so forth. We are for economic nationalism he said. He picked up those two words and put them together and said we are for economic nationalism. Not long after that the then PNP Mayor, Eric Bell, opening one of Matalon's big capitalist enterprise, Carrier Air Condition Corporation, said that he was glad to see Matalon pioneering and encouraging the development of economic nationalism. Now it would appear to me that what is economic nationalism, according to these pimps of the imperialists, is simply where capitalists in Jamaica try to make their capitalism as efficient as possible, while still remaining in alliance with imperialism. It is economics alright, but how the nationalism comes into the economic nationalism I don't know, for Carrier Air Condition Corporation is a merchant-contractor firm that imports air conditioners from America to be sold and installed in Jamaica. And as for

* Nickname for Michael Manley the Leader of the Parliamentary Opposition and the People's National Party.



bauxite, the best that Michael Menlie's economic nationalism can do is to beg the bauxite imperialists to employ more Black people im managerial positions. In other words, to set up more middle-class managerial pimps of the imperialists than we already have.

## THE CLERICAL AND TECHNICAL WORKERS

Now, he did not go on to anything further about the bauxite industry, and this is the crime. Do you know that until this day the BITU and NWU have compromised with imperialism in the most spineless way and refused to carry out the representation of clerical workers in the bauxite industry? And imagine, since 1952 bauxite workers here have been represented by the NWU. What would be much more effective if done in the bauxite industry - since no one wants to fight for the people's control of it, not even the great Joshua * - would be alongside of getting more Black middle-class positions is to have one hundred per cent trade-union representation in the bauxite industry.

They are so backward that they have even compromised on the representation of clerical workers in the sugar industry. Some years ago an African-Chinese brother from Duckensfield, along with other brethren, made an effort to organise a technical and clerical workers union in the sugar industry only to find themselves faced with extreme problems, and then to find Menlie and his NWU bureaucrats coming behind to offer them support. When the NWU official opportunists saw these clerical work-

* Another political nickname which Michael Manley himself encourages because of its religio-political significance in Jamaica. It builds up his self-image as a leader of the people from bondage into the Promised Land.

ers, whom they had abandoned all the time, trying desperately to represent themselves, they offered the kind of support, not to strengthen the workers conscious independent representation, but to use their 'big-men one-men' status to swallow up the clerical workers organisation within the NWU.

In every single industry in the country trade-union representation compromise with the capitalists and passes off the clerical and supervisory workers as a section of menegement. Imagine a clerical worker being a part of menegement. This is what these people do, look at people who are writing down numbers, time-keeping workers hours and keeping records here and there, and call them menegement. But they call them so, so as to keep them out of trade-union representation.

One must understand the nature of this crime, for what this does is to exclude from trade-union representation the most educated section of the working-class. By doing so, they are able to more easily fool other workers who are unable to read and write. They also further encourage the bad practice of those white-collar, tight-pants, mini-skirt clerical workers who are conceited enough to think that they should not struggle alongside other workers against the capitalist oppression.

They do not want, for instance, to get clerical workers in the sugar industry or in the bauxite industry participating in Delegate Council meetings with field workers - with the most illiterate and under-paid workers. No! The capitalist bureaucrats and their BITU-NWU agents do not want this.

In the same way that they carry out a policy of discrimination and set up a barrier between the intellectual people and working-class people, they also divide the more educated and conscious section of the working-class from the other sections of the



working-class. They try to spread this division and confusion on every level where Black people exist, and this is one of the crimes that is being overlooked by many trade-union organisers today.

Of late there have been certain developments in the organisation of clerical and supervisory workers in their own trade-union representation which is an improvement on the situation. But what is basically important is the unification of all workers at their place of work, either in the same union or in the co-ordination of their different union activities through a workers council if they are to effectively fight capitalist oppression. This must be achieved if the independent trade unions are to avoid the risk of splintering themselves and becoming little petty lodges, and so deepening the artificial divisions among workers.

## THE CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT

We know the failure of the church, the failure of the political parties, the failure of all these social welfare organisations that exist. They totally failed, every single one of them is nothing more than Babylonian institutions, and the little that they do, it is nothing more than to try and fool and soften the wrath of the working-class people against the whole society. Their main purpose is to confuse the working-class, and when a people live in the society where its institutions of leadership and administration has failed to such an extent, then whatever that exists as a natural organisation for you to participate in must be made full use of. And that is why in my opinion, the immediate task facing the independent trade unions today is one of transforming the identity of trade-union representation in the country.

The independent trade-unions must begin to be creative, because we cannot afford the luxury of using trade-unions in the way the British use it, or the German people, or the American and Canadian people use it. We must use it in the way we think best, and not as they have been using it - only to get the best out of capitalism. And the reason why they are able to get so much out of capitalism as unionised workers, is because the working-class people of Britain and America have been used to defend imperialism and prevented from supporting in any way the working-class people of neo-colonial territories. In truth and in fact, what is enjoyed as unemployment benefits, in the so-called welfare state and the fairly high rate of wages under capitalist ownership of the means of production in those territories, is possible as a result of the imperialist exploitation of the neo-colonial peoples of the world. It is not only based upon the struggles of those workers, it arises mainly from the imperialist exploitation of Africa and the mineral and sugar industries in the Caribbean. British productive and industrial capacity developed and more social benefits reached down to British workers while the British capitalists still maintain their high rates of profit. Even British political rights for British workers became more reformed and tolerant, as economic oppression increased in British colonies.

And what did the British TUC * and trade-union movement do about colonialism? Nothing that I know of or read of. What the British TUC did on one occasion anyhow, was to support their TUC counterpart in South Africa to oppose the trade-union representation of African workers and white workers in the same Federation of unions. According to the TUC. delegation that visited South Africa in 1953, they did this "in the greater interest and urgent necessity of unity".

Trades Union Congress



Of whose unity? Of the unity of white workers. Because the white workers were divided on whether or not they should unite with African workers in the same organisation of trade-union representation. And therefore it can be said, that these T.U.C. men came all the way from England to give official trade-union sanction to apartheid in trade-union representation in South Africa, making it more difficult for the political struggles of the African people in Africa.

Indeed the so-called policy of working-class internationalism, and the international trade-union organisations originating in the big industralised countries does not seriously consider the interests of the working-class of imperialist exploited countries. Whatever support these international organisations give-financial and otherwise, - end up in strengthening the bureaucratic opportunists in the NWU/BITU set up and even some of the independent union opportunists. Genuine working-class representation in the industralised countries and the imperialist dominated countries have yet to communicate we have yet to communicate as genuine trade-union organisations even in the Caribbean itself, in the interest of the working- class of the Caribbean. And no one up to now has said anything about association with trade-unions in Africa.

We have also seen the establishment of the Trade Union Institute at the University of the West Indies, which is mainly financed by American imperialism to train obedient union delegates and officials of trade-union representation in Jamaica. All the literature of the training courses of this institution is published abroad in the imperialist countries and does not substantially deal with the problems of workers in the imperialist dominated countries. The lecturers are drawn from professional servants and personnel officers of the capitalist class, and from NWU

and BITU official opportunists. And this is the educational base of delegates in the NWU, BITU, TUC and some independent unions.

Now when we see the extent to which the trade-union movement, both internationally and locally, is dominated by the interest of capitalism, we see that there is nothing that they use, no method, none of their models that we can adopt.

## THE TRADE UNION: THE NATURAL ORGANISATION OF THE WORKING-CLASS

Our trade-union representation would have to be used to the maximum of our abilities. There is no organisation that provides for the constant everyday participation of workers as a trade union does. Surely no official church, because the normal contact that working-class people have with the church is only on Sunday mornings or on Saturday mornings if you are a Seventh Day Adventist, that is the only time you have any contact - once a week. That is a very loose organisation to be in contact with. The political parties are even worse, that is once every five years when the two-party crooks want your votes which is many times worse than the church. It is only trade-union representation I see where we are in an organisation and everyday that organisation is in contact with us, because workers are always facing problems. Everyday we are having problems within our trade-union organisation and at our place of work, and are trying to resolve these problems. And therefore, there is no other organisation around that provides this everyday association among people as does trade-union representation.

And if that is the truth, naturally then, it means it is the most important organisation for us today and we must make sure that it is put to full use. So closely related it is to the life of people. That is why trade-union representation therefore, has got to take up during the week what the church hasn't been able to do. That is why the trade-unions have to take up the problems which the political parties have failed to solve since they only come in contact with us every five years. We have to take up our educational problems. There is the PCWU * which has started its programme of literacy training, and any serious trade-union would have to tackle this problem of education at its basic stages. It would even have to provide technical training, which is quite possible and quite practical, quite within the being of any trade-union representation today, to carry out a technical training programme of youth and unemployed in automobile work, in electrical work, in needlework and other trades.

All these things are within the capabilities of unions. And that is how we must sight up the trade-union movement - as beginning to deal with the educational problems of our people - fighting the capitalists and imperialists for higher wages - beating back exploitation and the extent to which the cost of living is rising - having to do with the cultural rejuvenation of our people, with the cultural development of an oppressed African and Black people in Jam-down - and beating back false doctrines of the white foreign men and their Black agents - building our consciousness as solid as a rock for the future struggle for our liberation.

In other words, there is a whole range of things to be done. This is no impossible thing you know, I am not talking about any dream business. I am talking about the everyday things that we see which are possible. Things that we see which are practical. Why is it the NWU-BITU workers are just dying to leave out the NWU-BITU bondage? Isn't it because the NWU and BITU have failed to do these things? Then which trade-

*Public Cleansing Workers Union

union representation do you think could come about and represent sugar workers or any other group of workers and don't go about tackling these basic things? You ask a sugar worker what are his main problems and see if he does not tell you all those things. And you ask any other group of workers and see if they don't tell you all those things. So all the things that workers have problems with is all of the things that trade-union representation should be dealing with.

## THE WORKERS ORGANISATION AT THE PLACE OF WORK

Now, I want to come off these general opinions and go to a particular situation in a particular place of work and show the extent to which the BITU and NWU leadership have ganged up with menegement in the country to fight against genuine representation and what are some of the experiences and the methods which workers would have to use today to overcome these capitalist agents.

In organising a trade-union representation at any particular place of work, union leaders and workers who are in the fore-front of the organising at that place of work, must begin to pay very serious attention to all the problems that will possibly face them during the period of time when they are trying to bring about their representation at that place of work. The old-time demagogy and soap-boxism can't work. There have been serious failures, and I can't help but mentioning a particular failure that provides a very forceful example, but which today, had the attempt been successful, would have provided an extraordinary stimulus to the development of independent trade-union representation. I speak particularly of the experiences of the Jamaica Maritime Union among banana workers.



## THE JMU AND BANANA WORKERS

When the JMU started their struggle for representation of banana workers enough consideration was not paid to, nor was there a strategy constructed on a full understanding that the banana industry was an industry exploited by imperialism, and it wasn't an industry in which the local capitalists were completely in control of. We must notice also that workers exist in various groupings throughout the industry. Some of them are small farmers, some load ships, some cut the bananas, some carry the bananas from the field to the boxing station - a whole group of workers, but in different categories, and even with different local needs and interests.

What should have been done is that extensive educational work - slowly but surely - should have been conducted throughout the entire banana industry, related to the nature of what was taking place in the industry.

It should be done because anyone seriously engaged in struggle against the imperialist and capitalist exploitation of labour today, should fully realise that any success of any trade-union representation in the banana industry and the sugar industry will provide serious undermining of the political power of the parliamentary parties, at the same time as it would win from the capitalists improved benefits for workers. The source of power, particularly that of the JLP, rests upon the votes they get from the people in the countryside. As we all know the NWU and BITU, are the survival machinery between elections that the PNP and JLP use to maintain effective influence over working-class votes. They also use union bureaucrats who are at the same time party propagandists, parish

councillors and MHRs. The representation and the efforts at representation made by the JMU was considered by its enemies not as just an effort to shift workers from one union to another. Nothing of the sort! At the seat of it was a terrible and dreadful fear by the Shearer Government that the efforts of the JMU would be the main source of unseating them in the next election. Any attempt to take these workers out of the bondage of the NWU and BITU spells serious political doom to the JLP/PNP. Therefore in truth and in fact, the activities of any union attempting to organise these workers constitute very serious political activity.

## LESSONS TO DRAW

EDUCATIONAL WORK:

Now what should have been done? An extensive amount of educational work was needed to explain the major problem - that while the local capitalists and small growers are the main owners of the banana plantations, the shipping and marketing of the bananas is operated by the imperialists in London, and therefore they control the prices that the local section of the industry gets for the fruits. And with growers, shippers, and the marketing agents, all trying to maintain their rate of profit, workers are thus forced to bear the cost of the inefficiency of the Banana Board and the foreign exploitation of the shipping and marketing arrangement. This is what keeps down banana workers wages.

Abeng * existed at that time, and Abeng was more than willing to provide the type of material that would have carried out the undermining of imperialist power over the industry and to make workers aware of their burden-bearing status in the industry by pointing out

* Abeng Weekly newspaper, February-September 1969.



the nature of this imperialist exploitation. If you check through the entire history of Abeng we will find only two articles that dealt with banana, and one was at the height of the crisis of the banana workers. And that is one of the problems, of course, which when Abeng starts forward again it mustn't find itself in. No sense talking in the midst of a crisis, because there is hardly any answer one can give to workers in the midst of a crisis. All these answers that one has now, should have been given some time ago during the period of preparation, but of course the JMU leadership did not see it important to associate with Abeng all the time. That is one particular method of work that the JMU should have used. In the same way that any independent union attempting to organise among sugar workers must do.

WORKERS COUNCILS AND VILLAGE COUNCILS:

The next thing was to settle up in a very serious and consistent way to work for the development of banana workers councils throughout the area of the banana industry - throughout those villages and areas in which the banana is cultivated, boxed and transported and eventually reach the wharves to be loaded on ships. Now these two distinct works would have done two things. It would have educated the population to the need of changing the trade-union representation in the banana industry, and not just banana workers alone being conscious of this need, for Abeng had a wide coverage. And this would have strengthened the JMU against the anti-trade union activities of the big banana growers and the government.

And another thing, any change of trade-union representation in the banana industry by the nature of what it is saying and doing would have provided the opportunity for the unity of the small banana growers and the workers. Now that is very key. No trade-union representation can be effectively

successful among agricultural workers, either in banana or sugar, unless small cane farmers are associated with the struggle of sugar workers and small banana growers are associated with the struggle of banana workers.

The entire struggle during that time excluded even a single word in any way, of any serious nature, to small banana growers who are equally exploited as the banana workers - in the same way that the small cane farmers are equally exploited as the sugar workers, because of the nature of imperialist domination.

Now, the village council which is the community form of working-class trade-union organisation would have provided the working opportunity for the better relation between banana workers and small banana growers, while the banana workers council would have provided the organisation for the immediate representation of banana workers at their respective places of work. So we see, how these two units of workers organisation, co-ordinating their social power both at the place where they work and the area in which they live, would effectively unite the poorest and most oppreseed people in the banana industry - the small banana growers and banana workers, to struggle effectively for their interests in the industry and their community.

But none of this basic work was done - none of this tedious, everyday, night and day work was done. None of this basic fundamental work was done. No. Instead, the banana workers were agitated into almost, but not quite, a final struggle, but final in the sense that if the workers and the JMU had won, it would have provided the opportunity for maximum rights of representation. Before that stage of confrontation was reached, all that work should have been done. But no, it wasn't done. But the banana workers were agitated into confrontation with the capitalist ownership and government without this work beingdone. And we mention now what happened.



## OR ELSE

Immediately after the strike was called by the JMU leaders the big banana growers, headed by Cargill and Champaignie, if I am not mistaken, and others, were able to go into the areas where the Maritime Union did not go and organise banana growers, including small banana growers, to be the backbone of the strike-breaking effort at Bowden Wharf, which did not close down, and was a threat to the other wharves which were closed down by strike action. But why was Cargill able to go in there? Cargill is a capitalist white men. And he was able to go and agitate strike-breakers from among poverty strickened and exploited Black people. He was able to do this for there was great political backwardness existing, because there was no educational work done among the people. He had the opportunity to organise strike-breaking from among the very people who should have stoned him when he entered the village - the very people whom he is exploiting, he was able to go in there and use big words and get them organised, with these small growers believing that their interests were tied up with his breaking the banana-port workers strike. So we see how without educational work the capitalists can always use the potential allies of the workers - the small farmers - to fight against the workers interests.

That was the work of the big banana growers, backed by the government and the Banana Board. And what did Shearer do? He went all the way to Port Antonio and agitated the people politically to fight against the Jamaica Maritime Union. Every second word that comes from the JMU leaders mouth is that 'I am non political', 'I am a non political union', while every single effort to destroy it was a political effort. How a man without a gun can be fighting a man with a gun I don't know. Or how any political effort can fight against a counter political effort with a non-political pro-

gramme I still don't know. But that is one of the self-made problems that this union is faced with. Calling itself a non-political union - while engaging itself in one of the national political problems concerning the banana industry, and being destroyed politically by the parliamentary political agents and their political methods.

I am mentioning this because to me, it is one of those regrettable periods of my life. It is one of those periods of my life I don't think I will ever forget the extent to which it hurts me. Because the existence of the Maritime Union had provided the opportunity for me to be associating myself in a meaningful way with the struggle of sugar workers - identifying the efforts and development of sugar workers councils in Westmoreland, in the western section of the Island with the work of the Maritime Union in the eastern section of the Island, for at a particular conference of banana-port workers six sugar workers and myself travelled from Westmoreland to Oraccabessa to say our piece at this big conferencewhich, it would appear to me had the beginning of a vital and important aspect of political work - the development of revolutionary trade-union representation among the two largest groups of agricultural workers - banana and sugar.

And all this great political potential was defeated - like a piece of paper that is suddenly ablaze - is suddenly out - flickering little pinhead lights - then to soft light ashes that even the breeze could blow away.

Now, you have people going around telling us that the government destroyed the Maritime Union - I don't want to hear any ignorance like that. Government can't destroy any genuine working-class representation in the country today. Destroy what!! How are you going to destroy something that the



people want - that is a working everyday part of the people? You think these government people are some gods - some big bad tin gods? You destroy yourself - by the methods of work that you are engaged in, and if we can be making tangible efforts like these and whenever we fail say that it is the oppressor who is destroying us, then it means that what we are doing is actually undermining our every effort - every single effort we are to make in the future will be destroyed with that attitude of thinking that the capitalist class and their government agents are invincible.

No - we won't be destroyed by that. It is the same problem at another place, and though I don't know the details of the problem I no doubt believe that it is the same problem, that the Maritime Union faces at the Ariguanabo Mills - not doing enough basic work - not having enough foresight and dedication of leadership to judge constructively the extent of the opposition of its enemies and cunningly manoeuvre around it and use scientific methods to reach home to the workers in a serious way - spending a little time with basic work - basic ground work and handwork, secret work, before you jump on the platform with demagogy and so on and so forth.

The platform is only for the last moment, or for some particular moment when it is necessary to further educate, agitate, and mobilise people around a particular happening. But no political movement or trade-union representation or no effort of the people in this country is going to suceed without genuine homework, without basic homework in the nooks and corners of this country here today - in the nooks and corners of the villages and places where people work and live.

The Maritime Union of today has developed almost a loser personality. Possibly the JMU did

not realise the extent of its commitment - it did not realise the serious extent to which it could have motivated the independent trade-union movement on a national scale, and its failure today has created very serious problems for banana-port workers - a very serious set back, creating a situation of unemployment in Port Antonio, Oracabessa and Mo-Bay that did not exist before, for the government closed down the banana port in these three towns in their effort to destroy the JMU and keep banana workers under the bondage of the BITU-NWU set up. And this failure also poses certain problems for the further development of the sugar workers council in Westmoreland.

We mentioned these detailed happenings to banana workers and the JMU because there is a very sharp line between success and failure when it comes to the liberation of the poor and oppressed people. A very sharp and distinct line - it is like standing at the edge of a precipice - there is nothing like failing now, then going in a corner to rest and sigh to yourself till you feel cool again to come back and start over - no, we are in much more serious times - we are in such a period now that when we fail, serious and dreadful setbacks are placed upon us. It is so serious that we have got to see to it that we do not fail, that the struggles of working-class trade-union representation do not fail.

The problem facing the representation of banana workers is a problem to get the port re-opened in these towns, which is a very sharp dividing line. And the problem facing sugar workers is one of starting forward all over again.

After seeing the victimisation of banana workers who tried to escape the BITU-NWU and TUC bondage in their independent union effort, let us sight up how in another way the NWU leaders used the workers



who have not yet escaped from the NWU bondage, for the PNP parliamentary opportunist purposes.

I did not see the Gleaner report about the workers who were fired, all of them together, down St. Ann's Bay by the Government for agitating against the last budget proposals concerning wages to government "subordinate" workers. I know many of them were fired in Savanna-la-mar and none of them have got back their jobs as yet, although in a reasoning with Guy Ottey, the PNP Chairman of the Westmoreland Parish Council, he said they would. In other words, this is a wicked plot by the NWU and PNP - because they are so narrow, because they failed so totally and completely as a Party for the people and as leaders who sit in parliament to provide the most elementary leadership to people who claim they are still following them. That they are faced with the dilemma of having to use the NWU workers to fight their political oppositional battles that they should be doing in parliament - you know what I am stating positively - I am stating that the strike called by the NWU leaders at a meeting at a school house in Porus to agitate the workers in Westmoreland, Portland, St. Elizabeth, St. Ann and other places to come out and strike at the Hospitals and Alms Houses was a strike that had nothing to do with the wage increases proposed by government for these workers.

It is a pity, to rahtid, that those workers could believe this and allow themselves to be fooled in these times - it had nothing to do with any wage increase. It is mainly an effort of these capitalist oppositional pimps in shirking their responsibility to the electorates to use parliament as a platform to raise and agitate against the serious problems now facing the working class.

Now anybody examining the nature of that PNP agitated strike will see this, because these guys

were so careful about their intentions that they tell workers to "go on strike but come back Thursday". When a man tell you "go on strike" and remind you so seriously that you must come back on Thursday, you will understand that the strike is not really something to get anything. All they wanted was two days of agitation where the press or the New Nation or the radio could say, 'Oh, Oh, Oh, - blah, blah - 'PNP-NWU fighting against JLP for workers wages, 'PNP against the budget', and so on and so forth and get everybody excited, and thereby give some oppositional life to the PNP Party.

And how did the JLP section of parliament react? They fired the workers - yes, Shearer fired them - but God forbid! Must the NWU workers make this sacrifice to bring them to their senses to realise the extent to which their trade-union leaders and the PNP have failed in parliament? Because, don't tell me that all these big time talkers like Blake and Coore and Manley couldn't out-talk the JLP members of parliament in such a way so that the population could realise that the PNP is a good Party and the JLP is a wicked Party. What happen to all these big talkers? But ah - I remember some time ago there was a proposal for parliament to be subjected to the TV lenses. And everyone of those sons-of-a-bitch oppose it - not one of them wanted to come on TV before the people when they are in parliament. And yet the American parliament is on television in some instances, and the British parliament is on television in some instances. What we see here is that they do not just copy the white men - they copy the worst practices of the white men.

They do not want parliament on TV because they have a reputation of not coming to work, that is what I understand about the history of parliament. Many times you have more absence in parliament of PNP members than you have of JLP members. And sometimes



the majority of both these Parties of men are absent - that is to say more than half of the fifty-three members of parliament are absent. So all ese things they don't want to reveal to the population. They don't want to reveal to the population how lazy they they are, how late they come to work, how much days they take from work, how much ignorance they chat about, the many laws they pass to protect the capitalists and against the workers who voted for them. They don't want to reveal all this to the population, and of course the capitalist press is not revealing it at all - when they do report you have to read between the lines.

And to further remind ourselves of the hypocrisy of the PNP parliamentarians - do you remember what happened when Seaga made certain proposals to collect two million dollars a year in taxes the employers have been evading to pay for over eight years now? The entire capitalist class came out - small and big, all their legal brains were shouting about how the tax bill affected certain democratic society rights. That capitalist church, known as the Farquharson Institute of Public Affairs, began to make excuses for the greedy souls of the employers, and the Gleaner as always, defended them to the maximum.

During all this time, the PNP parliamentarians did not do a single thing to support the tax proposals to get the taxes owned by these greedy employers. Instead they encouraged the capitalists for their own opportunist purposes - for they expect the capitalists to pay them back for their Parliamentary service with greater financial contribution to contest the coming elections.

This is absolute hypocrisy. Unless the PNP can explain to us, how come they agitated the NWU workers to strike against the wage proposals in the budget, while at the same time did not support the tax propo-

sals in the same budget, which was needed to help pay the wage increases to Government employees.

In truth and in fact these men are not just tha parliamentary opposition - they are an opposition to the progress of the working-class people.

## ORGANISING THE UNION

### PREPARATORY WORK

If the experience of the Jamaica Maritime Union in the banana industry must be seriously taken into account, and if it is important that workers should not be used in the way that they are used by the NWU, it means that trade-union representation must pay attention to some particular things.

It is not necessary for the kind of sacrifices that have been made to be made continuously to bring about a trade-union representation.

From the experiences that I have certain very serious mistakes were made concerning the development of the trade-union representation at Western Meat Packers. * Serious in the sense that although there have been somé measure of success up to now, it could have been made much more certain if those things were done.

We did not carry out enough educational preparation among the workers before it came to the knowledge of the menegement that there was an effort to bring about a trade-union representation in the factory. And the importance of that is this. The moment the Meneger hears about an effort to bring about trade-union representation in a place of work, the first thing they do, if they don't have an informer ring as yet, is to construct one to find out the serious workers who are carrying out sounds and work

* A food processing plant in the parish of Westmoreland.



about trade-union representation. Then they fire those workers. For by firing them, they hope they will be able to frighten the rest of workers from making any further attempt towards this trade-union representation. The consequence of this is to destroy the early efforts of communication between workers - especially if it is a union-representation for the first time - preventing workers picking up names secretly, and providing information and education as to what trade-union representation is all about.

If we don't have these conscious brothers and sisters in the place of work, it can seriously weaken the chances of success and therefore it would appear to me, that gone are the days of those old-time methods when you bulldoze yourself into a place of work on popularity or something like that. Therefore, the defence and protection of the right to work of the more conscious brothers and sisters is a vital necessity for the success of genuine trade-union representation. This is something trade-union bureaucrats have never taken into account, and the sacrifices of the hundreds of conscious but unknown brothers and sisters have been in vain. This situation suits both the capitalists and the trade-union bureaucrats alike. But on the other hand, it weakens the power and consciousness of the entire work force at the place of work.

Therefore, if workers are working at a place of work and feel that trade-union representation should come about, they should first realise the extent of the opposition of the capitalists for as I said before the capitalists are backed up by the entire society and all its institutions, including some union leaders themselves.

### SECRET PREPARATORY WORK

The one, two or three brothers and sisters who first take up the task of union representation

should recognise the importance of their defence and should settle down to secret meetings to check out and find out the most confidential of their co-workers, whether it is one more, two more or three more. Get into contact and establish a proper relationship with the trade-union that they seek to affiliate themselves with, bearing in mind at all times the security of their small but important organisation at the time, and settle down, very tediously, night and day settle down to solid educational work and ground work of constructing a solid collective leadership within the place of work. Educating those particular people who were confidential enough to come together, to educate themselves about all the problems and all of what they must expect in opposition to their union representation, and seriously prepare for this.

All the time should be given to this period of work. Oh yes - there should not be anything like saying .... "look, yes everybody want it now - yes, we want it now". Spend all the time, all the time in this preparatory ground work, it does not matter whether it takes a month in getting this done, or two months - if it even takes six months in getting this done. We must conscientiously educate and build up the ground work of these brothers and sisters who are to pioneer the union representation at their place of work.

OPEN WORK

While this is being done, after a certain period of time, a certain open and public work is carried out by the trade-union that you seek to affiliate yourselves with. Not by the workers - the particular group of secret pioneer workers. Oh, No, NOT BY THEM. But the professional union organisers and the trade-union organisation as a whole



should come along, make their presence felt, and by meetings at the place of work and by educational leaflets begin to explain to workers the importance of bringing about their trade-union representation. The educational leaflets and the sounds that the official union representatives will put out would be constructed from the information given to them by this secret pioneer group of workers within the place of work - so secret that when these trade-union representatives as an organisation comes on at the place of work and keep their meetings and distribute these leaflets - those brothers and sisters are in no way openly connected to this public activity, because the work that they are doing, building the ground work of a conscious collective leadership of workers themselves, requires secrecy.

And over a period of time, when we believe that enough understanding is had by other workers - not in waiting for one hundred per cent understanding - but enough to provide the strength of strike action to defend any worker against victimisation for joining their trade-union representation, then an open effort of organisation is now made to bring about total membership in the union representation.

There is no doubt that the conscious brothers and sisters will be known by menegement at that time, when it now becomes necessary to build the Delegate Council as the collective leadership body of workers at the place of work in the final preparation for union recognition. So the problem we basically face is although we need an efficient and public organisation of workers to be successful in the representational rights poll for union recognition, these wicked employers feel that they can wantonly victimise workers if their union representation is not yet officially recognised according to the Government Labour Relations policy.

Therefore, as workers we run the risk of being victimised before we are recognised, and neither the Ministry of Labour, the official trade-unions, and the leaders of Executive Government and Opposition Government, who themselves are trade-union leaders, have done anything to stop employers from victimising workers for organising the trade-union representation of their choice. So our experiences are, since we need trade-union representation - since we must have trade-union representaion in this state of affairs, then the substance of our organisation must be such that we are able to strike - to instantaneously strike in defence of any brother or sister who is victimised for exercising this elementary human right. And I know of no other way to successful strike-action than the unity and consciousness of workers, organised in a scientific way to bring about their maximum power at their place of work and their maximum love for each other. This is the only way. And although there have been unnecessary sacrifices arising from mistakes in our preparation, we eventually made our own organisation and developed consciousness and strength to strike successfully against further victimisation of our brothers and sisters by the employers at Western Meat Packers. And all that I am saying here can be related to all workers and all places of work.

EDUCATE THE MEMBERSHIP:

When the trade-union representation comes about, one of the most important considerations for it must be the educational programme among workers. There must be nothing left unturned, in terms of what is required to be explained to workers in the form of meetings at the work spot, lunch-time meetings by organisers and delegates, and by leaflets circulating in the workplace and surrounding areas and at other places of work. Because what we must realise is that



the opposition and propaganda that the employer is going to put out is not only against this union representation. They are going to talk so many things to intimidate workers that you will find that the educational programme, in order to beat back the propaganda of the employer will have to go into everything. A serious union representation educational programme must be more complete than that of many schools you see around you. It must deal with more things, more comprehensively than many colleges you see around you - because the educational programme apart from setting to undo the three hundred odd years of colonial deformation and white-wash of workers minds and morality, has also got to be tackling everyday, the new propaganda that will be introduced. Everyday the capitalists bring up new lines and spread confusion, you have to tackle them. And in dealing with many workers you have to tackle what was in that brother and sister's mind, from he and she was old enough to think and begin to talk.

BROADEN THE LEADERSHIP:

So there are two problems our educational programme faces, and having gone on to some extent with this type of work - and with success - we will have to continue to develop another particular emphasis. All efforts must be made to broaden the character and capacity of leadership. In the first instance, as you see we will have two, three or four workers coming out as the pioneer organisers to bring about trade-union representation. But that should remain for as short a time as possible. As early as possible, the burden of leadership upon these three or four brothers and sisters should now begin to be extended to as many of their brethren as possible. If the Delegate Council can take fifty delegates, LET IT TAKE FIFTY DELEGATES, so as to broaden the area of leadership and reduce the problem of getting over what we have to say and do among the rest of the workers.

The only consideration in the size of the Delegate Council is the amount of departments in the place of work and the amount of workers in each department. There must be representatives from every department and the amount of representatives from each department depends upon the quantity of workers and different skills in that department. We must broaden our leadership by any method we can use, but we must get it broadened.

Another of the methods that we see as important to the aim of broadening our representational leadership - and I think it is important for the independent unions in particular - is that of negotiating for ourselves. This is an effort we carried out at Western Meat Packers. Now don't tell me workers need a man from the University or a Lawyer to come to talk to Grace Kennedy and Company to give them 15c an hour more to keep their hands in brine in the production process. This is an industrial hazard - a health hazard to the worker himself, and the best person who could ever talk about this problem is the worker who works with his hands in the brine. So if we could get that worker to come and tell menegement he wants 15c more to keep his hands in the brine, that is something achieved, something very important achieved in broadening the representation of leadership and developing the capacity of leadership and collective representation as seen in the principles of Delegate Council that we must practice.

As far as workers interests are concerned, gone are the days of the single individual negotiator - which was what developed the popularity of Shearer and Manley, who are the two main anti-trade unionists in Jamaica today, because that is where Shearer and Manley got their popularity from - as being the old and only big time negotiators against



the white men in the bauxite industry and the sugar industry.

I read Manley the other day in the Gleaner saying ..... "we can look forward to a great and difficult negotiation with the bauxite companies". I heard it over the radio the other day. Now this bureaucratic opportunist want to do all the talking to the white men with NWU delegates sitting mainly as givers of evidence when the negotiation starts. I know that he wants to do it. Because he wants to attach his name to all the things workers may get, and this helps him you see, for the next election. So it is with Shearer. It was his practice to do most of the talking on behalf of sugar workers before the SMA * In those instances, sugar workers most of the time were never present, for every single negotiation was always in Kingston to the convenience of Shearer and the SMA, while sugar workers slaved in the fields as they were slaving from the days our people were brought from Africa. This type of ONE-MENISM is going on and on, and so the independent unions must develop a broad collective leadership of trade-union representation if they are to justify their existence in the trade-union movement. And workers wherever they are, in the BITU, NWU and TUC, must fight for democratic rights in these bureaucratic unions,at least fifty per cent of union dues in their own control and ownership, and more honest representation from these official union men.

## ONE-MENISM AND HOW TO FIGHT IT:

The methods of representation in the sugar industry are highly ONE-MENIST. All you have is a thief who exists as an area supervisor who lives in the area. He collects most of the bribes of that particular area, plus his wages from head office.

* Sugar Manufacturers' Association.

And at each farm of five hundred, three hundred and one hundred workers, you have one or two delegates from these farms who may never attend any negotiations with the SMA. And this in my opinion can be their undoing. Funny enough, I have always thought that this is one of the powerful ways in which these bandits keep themselves in power, but a very detailed examination of the nature of their one-man structure shows it is not so. It is their undoing because by the simple process of getting into contact with a brother delegate at a cane farm who was the delegate of the BITU, and discussing with him in a very serious way about the problems that he and other workers are having, within one week, the entire fifty-five workers at that farm were transferred from under the bondage of the BITU to the membership of the JMU - just as simple as that. Now if these sons-of-bitches had gone on to establish a representative council there and was bribing say, five workers, then our problem would have been that of convincing five workers. You may possibly be able to convince three of the five workers.

This brother, of course, used to get two shillings in the pound to collect union dues. All BITU and NWU chief delegates, as a matter of fact get 10 cents in the dollar. If there are any independent unions practicing this today, I want to tell them to stop it now.

The entire service of the Delegate Council is based upon a voluntary service, voluntary and committed on the basis of our consciousness as workers and any trade-union representation practicing this ten per cent cut as independent unions - and I don't know of any - must cease it immediately. It is one of the crimes - it is internal bribery - it is a backward method. It is a method in which you emphasis what you are getting from - rather than what you do



in the interest of your co-workers. It tries to make out that there could be something more important than our contribution towards the liberation of our people, on which all our emphasis must be. It must be on what you do.

None of the leftist brothers are getting ten cents in the dollar, and this same BITU brother who was getting two shillings in the pound, was able to be influenced by conscious reasoning to come over to the JMU representation without getting anything from the JMU. Because the brother understood the problems of the JMU as a new organisation facing financial problems, and with the Sugar Workers Council as the basis of his organisation, he himself would not continue to accept the two shillings in the pound, whether the JMU wanted to offer this or not.

I had this same experience among a group of workers in the food processing industry. This brother delegate of the NWU was getting two shillings in the pound, and in spite of his getting two shillings in the pound which increased his take-home pay to about thirty shillings a week more than other workers were getting, he was prepared to do without this commission tomorrow morning, and dash away his existing NWU representation. What we are seeing is that workers are liberating themselves from the moral degeneracy that trade-union bureaucracy tries to put them under, while the trade-union bureaucrats themselves become more degenerate day by day.

Now, this problem, the ONE-MENISM that they have constructed their organisation upon can be turned to their undoing - anyhow that we apply the relevant scientific method of work. ONE MENISM is not capable of keeping workers in bondage, it might appear so but it can be effectively opposed by grounding with those workers, who by nature of their position within the work place as BITU, NWU, TUC

delegates have influence over their co-workers. There is no delegate that I know today, unless he is a delegate of late, that is prepared to stick to representation of BITU, NWU, or TUC when the great majority of his co-workers want a change. I don't know of that. No! He, the delegate, apart from getting his ten cents in the dollar, is concerned with his reputation, and how his brother and sister workers see him, and therefore many workers today are abandoning this role of ONE-MEN delegate for the trade-union officials.

The delegate who collects this ten cents in the dollar is expected to deal with all aspects of union representation - outside of negotiation for claims - at his work place. This he cannot do, so what he ends up doing is to make excuses for union officials who themselves cannot attend to many problems, and is silenced by the menegement, either with fear or favours, while his co-workers' unsettled grievances pile up week after week. And with workers dues floating around, the union officials see it necessary to pay the delegates a portion of the spoils so as to keep them on their side.

But organise a Delegate Council to collectively attend to the workers interests and put union dues under workers control and ownership and you will find there is no reason to pay any individual delegate, either chief or otherwise.

It is now only for us, on this genuine side of trade-union representation, to examine all these problems within the trade-union movement as a whole and to act on them accordingly - helping workers to move from their frustrating strike actions against union bureaucracy that does not attend to their problems, and give organisational form to their conscious intentions for genuine representation at their place of work.



## A NATIONAL IDENTITY FOR THE INDEPENDENT UNIONS:

Well, finally I just want to add that the whole problem of trade-union representation as seen by the independent trade-union representation is that we need a national identity that is very seriously lacking. And why do we need this identity so badly? Because workers are loosing hope more and more each day. They are losing confidence in trade-union representation on a whole. The increasing burdens of low wages, high prices, high rental and refusal by landlords to allow children in the homes, unemployment in the family, and victimisation at work is becoming unbearable For years now workers are resorting to spontaneous strike action as the only way out, and even this has not improved the situation to any real extent, for many of the strikes have failed because of the sell-out by union leaders.

The younger generation, faced with permanent unemployment is rebelling against the whole society in various ways, and all that the PNP can come up with is a commission on crime * while the Government increase its police brutality and the oppression in the lock-downs and courthouse.

Our women folk have to settle for a life of permanent drudgery in the homes, or offering their bodies to would be employers as the only means of getting a little food and somewhere to live, because as women they are the most unemployed and the most unorganised where they are employed. Those who can afford it are fleeing the country by way of the Canadian and American Embassies.

On the other hand, the capitalist wallowing in luxury and profits, does not depend solely on their JLPNP political agents to represent them.

* In 1969 the PNP organised a Commission on Crime to which was made up [illegible] people and clergymen.

They have their own particular national organisations - the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, the Jamaica Manufacturers Association, the Jamaica Employers Federation, that are responsible for particular areas of capitalist representation. For instance, not long ago, Fletcher, then Managing Director of the Daily Gleaner advocated at a meeting of the Jamaica Employers Federation the establishment of a strike insurance fund to secure themselves against losses arising from strike action. When he was asked at the meeting .... 'what if the unions organised a strike fund of their own'. Fletcher answered saying that .... 'this needs money, union dues would have to be raised and the unions are having trouble to collect the present fees'. This is indeed an expression of utter contempt for the organisational capacities of workers, but if we are serious, history could easily prove Fletcher wrong.

As a matter of fact, you will notice that what Fletcher is talking about is union leaders and increase of union dues to them but that is not what we are talking about. The basis of our strike fund is the establishment of co-operatively owned markets and production activities, in association with the community and places of work, as we had outlined in the principles of Workers' Councils trade-union representation.

Faced with these complex problems, that amounts to the increasing power of capitalists and the frustration of workers, it is urgent that our work begin to take on a national outlook if our activities are not to be isolated from the knowledge of the great majority of workers, and if those workers who will inevitably strike are to be able to win their strikes.

By this identity I mean that you hear that a certain place is the headquarters of an independent union, but I am prepared to ask anybody in this



audience what they understand by "an independent union", and bet they are unable to give any tangible example. At best, their explanation is negative - an explanation of withdrawal - that is to say "I am not a BITU, I am not a NWU member". That is all they can say - what they are not - but what they are, well, that is left to be answered.

IT IS NOT...
IT IS NOT..!
IT IS NOT ENOUGH.

Now what I am saying is that it is not enough to say what you are not - we have got to have a positive identity, we have got to have an identity in which people can see us as a positive and working movement in the struggle of our people - not what we are not. Because to be not anything is not to be anything nowadays. Nothing at all. You have got be something. When you give your explanation of something as being 'non' then I think you have a problem on your hands. This problem is highly exemplified in the consistent sounds, in the magazines and arguments of the independent unions which keep calling themselves non-political unions. That is their best explanation. But this is a cheap explanation. It is a cheap response to the angry sounds that workers are putting out that "the unions are controlled by the political parties", for instead of working seriously to develop the political consciousness of workers we try to satisfy their existing political consciousness by telling them we are non-political hoping they will join us quicker.

But let me ask: if the JLP and PNP were practicing political and economic policies in the interest of the working class, would the workers be complaining about the affiliation of these parties to their trade-union representation?

Or to be more positive .... isn't it because the majority of MHR's and Senators are themselves owners of capitalist businesses and big shareholders in other capitalist companies (quite apart from the fact that the party policies of these men defend capitalism which is opposed to the interest of the working class) why workers are complaining about the parliamentary parties affiliated to their trade-union representation?

Therefore, with our entire lives being influenced by politics, with politics being nothing more or less than the administration of economic policies, with the economic situation being the immediate reason for trade-union representation, it is ridiculous to think that we can make any headway, that the workers cause can be defended from a non-political position. Apart from achieving nothing what this position might very well do is to make us suspect as regards our theoretical foresight and serious practical commitment to the cause of the working class.

Therefore we should immediately drop this word non-political from our vocabulary and begin to identify our work with the economic, cultural and political liberation of the working class.

We must develop a working policy that says what we mean, and does what we say we are going to do - so as to guarantee our consistent dedication to the working class.

We must build co-operatively-owned markets and production activities from the various skills that exist among us and the union dues under our control, so as to guarantee an efficient economic base to materially sustain our strike actions.

We must build the national collective leadership of the independent trade-unions from the most



conscious participants of the workers councils at places of work - so as to guarantee that the administration and destiny of our organisation is controlled by us the workers, not only in person but also in ideology and spirit.

We must organise the workers councils among agricultural workers in such a way, that the centre of administrative activity is based in the villages where workers live - so as to guarantee the unity of workers and peasants. To more effectively straighten out the problems of life and work in the countryside, and be more able to occupy and cultivate the unused lands of the Government and estate owners for the benefit of workers families and worker councils on a whole.

We must organise the details of our trade-union activities in such a way that all the benefits and facilities of our organisation are avilable to unemployed workers; it is from the unemployed and self-employed of the community that we must organise the workers of our production and marketing operations. We must defend the rights of the unemployed to work and consistently expose capitalism for what it is - the cause, the only cause of unemployment.

We must build a research and educational programme that will be as efficient as possible, to be the socialist ideological motive force of our practical activities. So as to relentlessly expose the ideology of capitalism and the activities of its Governing agents both local, foreign, black and white. And educate ourselves to the heights of consciousness as the working class who produces everything for the existence of society but who, continuing to labour from no-pay chain slavery to our present condition as money wage slaves, at all times to the benefit of capitalism and foreigners. We have no other alter-

native but to overthrow capitalist society if there is to be a better way of life for all workers. There and then we will not only be concerned with getting more pay, but would be fully occupied with organising agriculture, the factories, the schools and communities for the benefit of the working people.

This must be our identity, must be what we are working for. If our present status of being independent of the parliamentary two party unions is to have any meaning at all, if the efforts we have made to come into this independent existence is to have any real purpose at all.

Now, it is good to remind ourselves as we did at the start of our talk - that our struggle is one of the working class versus the capitalist class and the only reason why we can speak of unions versus menegement is because it is in production - in the working relations of production in the factories and on the farms that the most regular everyday contradictions between the social co-operative way in which production work is done, and the way in which the goods that are produced is individually owned by shareholders for purposes of profits and power, that the most consistent struggles of the working-class takes place.

That is why the struggle does not end at the negotiating table, in claims won, which is proven by the fact that claims won only have meaning over a period of time according to the terms of contract. Therefore we must recognise this struggle of unions versus menegement for what it is - a central part of the struggle of our people for total liberation and everything we do and say must be directed towards this outcome.

Therefore I trust that this identity will be so clear in our minds that a man leaving this hall could say to anyone, "I went to a meeting of the independent



unions" and he is asked "what is that .... independent unions?" And you answer "yes man, is the independent unions. They are so and so and so and so". And the person will be able to say "Oh, I see, so that is the independent unions. When you going back to another meeting you must tell me. I would love to know some more about them so I can tell my other co-workers".



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# UNIONS

# VERSUS

# MENEGEMENT

# MANAGEMENT

# MANAGEMENT

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